

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 IO-10 SAM-01 SAB-01 OMB-01 AID-05

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /074 W

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R 061331Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6990

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 3531

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IS, XF

SUBJ: POLITICAL CONTROVERSY OVER PACE OF DEVELOPMENT
IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

1. ISRAELI PRESS OVER PAST WEEK HAS REVEALED RESURFACING
OF CONTROVERSY BETWEEN PROPONENTS OF FASTER PACE OF
ISRAELI SETTLEMENT IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND MINISTER
OF HOUSING OFER, LIBERAL MAPAI MINISTER WHO WAS ALSO IN
MIDDLE OF MAALE ADUMIM AFFAIR SEVERAL MONTHS AGO.

2. DURING RECENT VISIT TO GOLAN HEIGHTS, OFER REPORTEDLY
ADOPTED FIRM STAND AGAINST DEMANDS OF SETTLERS THAT
GOVERNMENT SPEED UP DEVELOPMENT OF URBAN CENTER THERE AND
ACCELERATE CONSTRUCTION OF ADDITIONAL RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS
IN EXISTING SETTLEMENTS. SETTLERS COMPLAINED THAT NO
CONCRETE STEPS TOWARD ESTABLISHMENT OF URBAN CENTER HAD
BEEN TAKEN ALTHOUGH WELL OVER YEAR HAD ELAPSED SINCE
GOVERNMENT DECIDED TO DO SO. OFER REPORTEDLY
RESPONDED THAT HE HAD NO INTENTION OF ESTABLISHING CITY
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ON THE GOLAN. RE DEMAND OF SETTLERS FOR MORE HOUSING

UNITS, OFER PLEADED LACK OF FUNDS. (ABOUT 600 PEOPLE ANSWERED RECENT HISTADRUT AD SOLICITING ADDITIONAL SETTLERS FOR GOLAN.)

3. PRESS HAS ALSO CARRIED ACCOUNT OF KNESSET SESSION MAY 28 DURING WHICH OFER WAS TAKEN TO TASK BY LIKUD MEMBERS FOR SHORTCOMINGS IN CONSTRUCTION BOTH ON GOLAN AND IN OFIRA (SHARM ASH-SHEIKH). AFTER POINTING OUT THAT LIKUD ITSELF HAD BEEN DERELICT IN PROVIDING NUCLEUS (PEOPLE AND SEE MONEY) FOR ONLY TWO SETTLEMENTS THUS FAR, OFER DID PROMISE THAT START WOULD BE MADE THIS SUMMER ON CONSTRUCTION OF FIRST 200 HOUSING UNITS AND INTERNAL ROAD NETWORK AT "CITY ON THE GOLAN". RE DEVELOPMENT OF IFIRA, OFER SAID THAT DUE TO RISING COSTS, CURRENT BUDGET (IL 30 MILLION) ALLOWED CONSTRUCTION OF "ONLY" 332 HOUSING UNITS RATHER THAN THE PLANNED 450.

4. COMMENT: SETTLERS ON GOLAN ARE CONTINUALLY DISSATISFIED AT WHAT THEY CONSIDER SLOW PACE OF DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR REGION. THEY UNDOUBTEDLY ALSO HARBOR LINGERING SUSPICION THAT GOI MIGHT ACCEDE TO FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS WITH SYRIA IN ORDER TO OBTAIN SECOND-STAGE AGREEMENT IN SINAI. THEY MAY ALSO FEEL SOME JEALOUSY OVER OFFICIAL PREFERENCE GIVEN TO SETTLEMENT OF RAFAH JUNCTION AREA, WHERE REGIONAL CENTER OF YAMIT IS ANTICIPATING ITS FIRST INHABITANTS BY END OF SUMMER.

5. SITUATION IS SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT AS REGARDS SHARM ASH-SHEIKH, WHERE GOI POLICY TOWARD PERMANENCY OF SETTLEMENT IS CLEARER (TEL AVIV 3074) BUT WHERE DEVELOPMENT IS HIGHLY EXPENSIVE AND AVAILABLE FUNDS INADEQUATE. IN THIS REGARD, ISRAELI LEADERS IN RECENT WEEKS HAVE PUBLICLY REAFFIRMED GOI INTENTION OF RETAINING SHARM. THEY HAVE EXPLAINED TO SEVERAL VISITORS THAT THIS IS NECESSARY IN ORDER (A) TO CONTROL STRAITS OF TIRAN AND (B) TO BE IN POSITION TO BLOCKADE GULF OF SUEZ AS RESPONSE TO FUTURE ARAB BLOCKADE BAB EL-MANDEB. NEVERTHELESS, UNAVOIDABLY SLOW PACE OF CIVILIAN SETTLEMENT OF OFIRA PROVIDES AMMUNITION FOR OPPOSITION ATTACKS.

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6. OFER SEEMS DESTINED TO REMAIN TARGET FOR SUPPORTERS OF FASTER "PROGRESS" IN TERRITORIES. IN FINAL ANALYSIS, HOWEVER, GOI WILL MAKE DECISIONS BASED AS MUCH ON DOMESTIC POLITICAL EXIGENCIES AS ON FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS. VELIOTES

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